



February 14, 2023

Emily McEvoy

Political Organizer, NBRJC

Dear Senator Lesser, Representative Gilcrest, and members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Emily McEvoy, and I live in Middletown. I strongly support HB 6616 to expand access to the HUSKY program to undocumented people in CT up to the age of 26.

I'm a Board Member and Political Organizer with the New Britain Racial Justice Coalition (NBRJC). The NBRJC is a grassroots organization based in New Britain, Connecticut. Our membership is composed of roughly 60 working-class people from the greater New Britain area who want to organize for racial and economic justice, and do so through mutual aid, political education, and community action. We belong to Recovery For All – a statewide coalition fighting for a better future for Connecticut, bringing together more than 60 community, faith, and labor organizations.

On a personal level, I was fortunate to have the HUSKY program as a means of survival throughout my young adulthood. When I was 18, an unexpected emergency landed me in the hospital, and a 6-hour ordeal that included an ambulance ride resulted in an over-\$3000 bill. A prompt application for HUSKY allowed me to have this bill covered retroactively, preventing what would have been immense debt for myself and my family. The system worked smoothly and left me with the impression of care. ALL Connecticut residents of low income deserve the same safety net.

On a community level, the NBRJC recognizes that lack of HUSKY access for our undocumented community members is a matter of not only racial and economic justice, but public health. Undocumented immigrants over 12 years old are excluded from Medicaid and CHIP programs (HUSKY in CT), Medicare, Access Health CT state exchange coverage and financial help, and private insurance coverage. As roughly half of all mental health disorders start by the mid-teens and three-fourths by the mid-20s,¹ the current age exclusions for HUSKY prevent undocumented residents from early treatment and prevention at the time when mental health conditions typically arise. Our public mental healthcare infrastructure in this state is already woefully lacking and has suffered many cuts over the past decade. Expanding HUSKY would

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1925038/>



allow for more *proactive* treatment of mental health and all chronic health conditions, which would lessen the burden on our services designed for times of crisis.

Myself and the NBRJC support HB 6616, and hope the committee will vote in favor. In the future, I urge this committee to continue working to expand HUSKY access to all immigrant people, regardless of age or immigration status. Thank you.

Emily McEvoy
Middletown, CT
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